



Henderson County Department of Public Health

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Questions/ Comments about COVID-19

May 5- May 19, 2020

The following is a summary of the COVID-19 Q&A discussion from the May 20, 2020 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

Topic #1 – Contact Tracing:

1. With the recent increase in cases outside nursing homes, 33 to 68 in past 2 weeks, do we have a contact tracing operation geared up to keep up with this?

Yes. We have existing capacity that can be adjusted for these needs and continue to train and onboard additional personnel like retired nurses and staff from other departments. If that capacity becomes strained, we have access to the Carolina Community Tracing Collaborative for contracted personnel as needed.

Topic #2 – Masks and Distancing:

2. Why aren't you doing more to educate about and promote the use of masks and social distancing?

We have been conducting public information outreach including talking about the importance of both during these sessions. We realize that we need to continue to use different types of media and outreach to connect with as many people as possible. We continue to ask people to access current COVID-19 information at our public health website, the NC Department of Health and Human Services and CDC.

Topic #3 – Cases Outside Long Term Care Facilities:

3. Can you do some more public analysis on cases in the general community outside the nursing home cases and deaths? County dashboard currently shows 283 cases, 215 in nursing homes. It seems that the rate of increase in the general community has been growing more rapidly in the last few weeks. What's happening and how should we be sharing, educating, warning the population?

Although I have characterized the testing outside of long-term care facilities as general population testing, a large portion of that testing is tied to our contact tracing efforts associated with confirmed cases. Many of those positive cases are simply household members of the confirmed case. Overall, our confirmed case rate since we started testing in March is just under 4%. From May 2 to May 15, our confirmed case rate was 7% and primarily influenced by testing close contacts. We don't see any new dynamic or issue influencing that change other than expanded testing and expanded contact tracing.